

Chadwick Bay Champion Community

Strategic Plan

2002

INTRODUCTION

The City of Dunkirk, Towns of Dunkirk, Hanover, Pomfret, Portland and Sheridan, and Villages of Brocton, Fredonia, and Silver Creek have formed a regional partnership to guide the northern Chautauqua County area into the new millennium.

Designated by USDA/Rural Development as a "Champion Community" region in 1996, the shared desire of the participating communities is to preserve the character of the region wherein rural surroundings are enjoyed and none of the advantages of the city are lost while fostering safe, progressive, prosperous living and improving the quality of life for all residents through preserving and expanding existing businesses and industry, seeking new complimentary enterprises, and creating new opportunities for job creation and economic revitalization.

As such, the following vision has been adopted for the Champion Community Initiative:

To promote and enhance a comprehensive and integrated regional planning process that identifies priorities and focuses resources on those identified priorities.

In the formation of the Chadwick Bay Champion Community Network, intermunicipal collaboration and cooperation were considered critical to the achievement of sustainable communities.

Since its designation as a Champion Community, the Chadwick Bay region, among other actions, has:

- completed the Chadwick Bay Region Comprehensive Plan;
- initiated the preparation of the Chadwick Bay Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan; and
- effectively advocated for completion of infrastructure at the Chadwick Bay Industrial Park.

The opportunity now exists to meld together various other development themes into a 5-year strategic plan to accelerate action on and secure funding for:

- previously identified economic development projects;
- intermunicipal cooperation opportunities;
- tourism development projects and programs; and
- human services, childcare and housing initiatives.

This strategic plan represents the most recent work of The Chadwick Bay Champion Community's municipal leaders and is focused on improving economic and community development efforts in northern Chautauqua County.

In accordance with USDA/Rural Development requirements, this plan was developed as a joint effort, has been reviewed by participating communities, and reflects priorities for the next five years.

The plan outlined herein is built on community input, public-private partnerships, and intermunicipal cooperation, and based on the regional situation analysis incorporated into the original Rural Enterprise Zone program application.

By defining goals, pooling resources, and overcoming obstacles the Chadwick Bay Champion Community Initiative provides for the realization of significant social and economic opportunity within the region.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The Chadwick Bay region's 1994 application for nomination as a federal Rural Enterprise Community detailed the socio-economic history of the area, presented a needs assessment and proffered numerous plans of action to address those needs.

It documented the transition of the region's economy from a primarily agricultural base, to the advent of significant durable goods manufacturing followed by the subsequent decline in heavy industrial activity being displaced by food processing, tourism and retail trade sectoral reliance and growth present today. In addition, during the 1990's, communication technology industries began to emerge and expand.

The transitions occurring within the region's economy resulted, during the 1980's and 1990's, in a high incidence of unemployment, underemployment and out-migration. The effect was significantly increased pressure on various levels of local government to

reduce the cost of providing services in order to retain remaining industry, and to simultaneously reduce the tax burden growth rate while facing increased demands on social service systems.

Likewise, it became further incumbent on local governments to seek collaborative initiatives to attract new business investment and promote job creation.

The elected leaders of the Chadwick Bay municipalities were active participants in the 1999 series of countywide community summits designed to formulate community discussions as well as evaluations on how to make a better future for the county and to continue the work of setting a mission and vision for a new county-wide plan. A total of 5 summits were held across the county.

They focused on four main areas:

- Core economic development concerns (Economic development, infrastructure, small business, tourism, and agriculture),
- Public sector issues affecting the economy (Taxes, government reform, participation, and regionalism),
- Environmental concerns (Planning/"Smart growth", Environment, and sustainable development),
- Social concerns, especially education, youth and families (Education, youth, social needs, and diversity)

The Chadwick Bay Community Summit's list of priorities were as follows:

1. Millennium Highway/Planning
2. Regionalism/cooperation
3. Youth and education
4. Development, retention, and support
5. Downtown, waterfront development
6. Tourism, cultural, and otherwise
7. Crime prevention
8. Quality child care
9. Promoting diversity
10. Health care

In addition to the community summits held in November of 1999, a daylong focus group meeting attended by residents, service providers and governmental representatives was held on June 29, 2000. Participants identified community strengths and barriers.

The identified strengths ranged from educational facilities, to geographic location, a number of tourist attractions, and a strong work ethic. Identified barriers included lack of close working relationships between towns and villages, lack of a skilled workforce, fragmentation and lack of venture capital.

The combination of the community assessment undertaken for the original Rural Enterprise Zone application, the 1999 community summits, and the day-long update conducted in June, 2000, provides the basis for the categorical issue areas, goals and strategies addressed in this strategic plan. Quoted references are taken from the original REZ application as a basis for reaffirmation of the original strategy components or to distinguish necessary modifications reflective of current regional conditions and circumstances.

These goals and strategies reflect the most urgent and important priorities identified during the various sessions. The municipal leaders of the Chadwick Bay Champion Community will individually and collectively work to realize the goals outlined below.

GOALS & TASKS:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & OPPORTUNITY

"For business development to occur in the Northern Chautauqua County region ... three critical areas must be addressed for the region to once again become a vibrant, productive business setting ... a) perception, b) human resource development and c) infrastructure."

BENCHMARK GOAL 1: INCREASE BUSINESS GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE CHADWICK BAY REGION (Attachment 11)

"(The Chadwick Bay region's) location indicates that the potential for growth exists for manufacturing, food processing, technology and tourism. Recruitment will require that a

marketing strategy is developed and implemented in order to encourage non-local business to locate in the area ... to maintain and pursue diversified jobs."

TASKS:

- A.) Secure increased capital available to entrepreneurial enterprises and small, women and minority owned businesses through the Chautauqua Microenterprise Loan Fund.
- B.) Establish a Telecommunication Technology Center at SUNY-Fredonia.
- C.) Complete a Food Industry Technology Transfer Program in conjunction with SUNY-Fredonia, the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency and local food processing companies.
- D.) Construct as market demand dictates, buildings at the Chadwick Bay Industrial Park
- E.) Complete Spec Building at the Chadwick Bay Industrial Park
- F.) Secure Capital for microenterprise loan fund, minority, women, enterprise loan fund
- G.) Establish a "high technology" business park in conjunction with the Millennium Parkway project.
- H.) Establish Empire Zone designations for targeted industrial development within the region.
- I.) Implement a targeted "brownfields" redevelopment program.
- J.) Establish environmentally friendly electric steam generation and delivery systems to reduce the costs of energy to public and private sector entities.
- K.) Establish an Economic Development "One-Stop" Services Delivery Center within the Chadwick Bay Region
- L.) Secure completion of the Lake Erie Grape Research Station Modernization Project in conjunction with Cornell University, the State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Industrial Development Agency.
- M.) Complete an agricultural waste "compost" to "fertilizer" demonstration project in conjunction with SUNY Fredonia

- N.) Establish in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce a “Buy Chautauqua/Pride of New York” agricultural products promotion program.
- O.) Complete the Village of Fredonia Canadaway Creekside Project.

BENCHMARK GOAL 2: INCREASE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY SYSTEM CAPACITY WITH IN THE CHADWICK BAY REGION (Attachment 14)

"In order to have a skilled workforce, we must provide basic skills training ... the growing diversity of ethnic backgrounds of school age children has cause literacy within the region to become a significant (issue) ... the success of the public schools and prosperity of business and industry are inextricably intertwined ... (we must) develop better educated, more highly skilled workers to stimulate and maintain economic revitalization within (the region) ... and, in turn, facilitate community progress."

TASKS:

- A.) Establish an H1B training program in conjunction with ChautauquaWORKS, Jamestown Community College, and SUNY Fredonia.
- B.) Support and initiate in partnership with ChautauquaWORKS and other workforce development agencies, strategies and projects that will enhance workforce training and employment opportunities.

BENCHMARK GOAL 3: INCREASE REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS IN SUPPORT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (Attachment 13)

"Growth and (regional) stability will not occur without the necessary infrastructure ... a key to competition in the future economic market will be cooperative efforts in providing basic services ... (we must) ensure that adequate services will be available to existing local industry, as well as for potential (growth and) development in the future ..."

TASKS:

- A.) Complete, in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Department of Intermunicipal Services, North County Intermunicipal Water Cooperative project(s).
- B.) Complete, in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Department of Public Facilities, the Millennium Parkway Project.

- C.) Expand capacity of the Dunkirk Wastewater Treatment Plan to meet area quality of life and economic development needs.
- D.) Implement telecommunications connectivity initiatives that will provide fiber optic linkages to government, human services, and private-sector entities.
- E.) Complete identified Community Facilities projects including:
 - Sheridan Town Hall/Community Center
 - Portland Town Library/Community Center
 - COI Children, Discovery and Intergenerational Services Complex
 - Multi-Sport/Multi-Use Community Facility
- F.) Complete Route 60-Carriage House Access Road
- G.) Implement the Village Park Improvement Project that consists of the reconstruction of the track, the relocation of the Ballpark's backstop and the installation of a new electrical system in addition to the upgrading of the existing system.

REGIONALISM

"Reinventing and re-engineering the public sector is revealing that government should be used to steer the boat, not row it. Leaders must guide, coach, and support citizens through change by realistically assessing the needs of the citizens of the community and developing a mutual vision for the future of the region built on consensus that will be carried forward by each administration to come."

BENCHMARK GOAL 4: INCREASE AND EXPAND INTER-MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

(Attachment 12)

"Through defining goals, pooling resources and overcoming obstacles, public, private and public-private partnerships will provide the leadership and opportunities for all people to realize a better quality of life (within the region) ... Continued cooperative ventures (are required) to altering the negative perception of the local business climate."

TASKS: Regional

- A.) Conduct, through the SUNY-Fredonia Center for Rural Development & Governance, local government operations & management research projects, including but not limited to regional policing studies.
- B.) Establish a Chadwick Bay Region Local Area Network computer system for linked planning and development initiatives.
- C.) Complete SUNY Fredonia Center for Rural Regional Development

BENCHMARK GOAL 5: IMPROVE REGIONAL PLANNING AND ZONING PROCESSES (Attachment 15)

"A comprehensive review of all zoning ordinances must be made in order to ensure that (regional) development is coordinated."

- TASKS:**
- A.) Complete, in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Department of Planning, the Chadwick Bay Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.
 - B.) Complete, in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Department of Planning, SUNY-Fredonia Center for Rural Regional Development & Governance and the Dunkirk-Sheridan Empire Zone, regional GIS mapping.
 - C.) Establish a regional socio-economic data repository at the SUNY-Fredonia Center for Rural Regional Development & Governance.
 - D.) Complete targeted farmland purchase of development rights projects as needed.
 - E.) Amend the countywide "Right to Farm Law" to include a dispute resolution mechanism relating to sound agricultural practices.

TOURISM

"(The region's) location on the southern shores of Lake Erie provides immediate access to the world's largest supply of fresh water, it lies within a day's drive of all major northeastern cities of the United States and Canada, and it is served by major highway arteries providing it with convenient accessibility for industrial and business growth (and tourism) opportunities."

BENCHMARK GOAL 6: ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT OF AREA TOURISM RESOURCES (Attachment 16)

"The (Dunkirk) harborfront area (and Chadwick Bay Lake Erie shoreline) is only a partially realized asset ... further investment in waterfront (development) could become a springboard for tourism, trade and urban recreation (within the region)."

- TASKS:**
- A.) Complete the "Historic Harbor Development Project Phase II Joint Venture" project.
 - B.) Complete the "Harbor Heritage Renaissance Center" project.
 - C.) Complete revitalization and reuse of the Dunkirk Amtrak railroad

station.

BENCHMARK GOAL 7: INCREASE PROMOTION OF TOURISM ASSETS (Attachment 17)

"We need to accept tourism as a legitimate industry and work to promote tourism..."

- TASKS:**
- A.) Complete the Chadwick Bay Welcome Center Project.
 - B.) Establish agritourism initiatives such as the Chautauqua Wine Trail.
 - C.) Establish the Chautauqua Wine and Grape Museum.
 - D.) Complete AIDER Agritourism Strategic Plan.

HUMAN SERVICES

"A large number of service agencies exist (within the region) to service the needs of the community ... a priority of the plan is to coordinate all service agencies in order to provide more efficient and cost-effective service."

BENCHMARK GOAL 8: IMPROVE REGIONAL HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM DELIVERY (Attachment 18)

"Coordination of services through a network of community-based partnerships (is essential for the region to) develop a healthy community through affordable, accessible and effective (human services) programs."

- TASKS:**
- A.) In conjunction with Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc., research human service delivery programs and identify service gaps.
 - B.) Develop a database of human services providers and programs.
 - C.) Re-establish, in conjunction with Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc., the DIAL Information and Referral System.

CHILD CARE

"... establishing a healthy community .. to promote values and stability (requires) affordable, accessible, and effective health care, and family and youth support services.."

BENCHMARK GOAL 9: INCREASE QUALITY CHILD CARE CAPACITY (Attachment 19)

"All public (child care) centers report waiting lists which indicates a sufficient need exists within the region for additional (facilities)"

- TASKS:**
- A.) Develop, in conjunction with Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc., a "best practices" training and certification program for family day

- care facilities.
- B.) Establish, in conjunction with Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.,
 a
 program to encourage the development of employer-
 sponsored, on-
 site child care facilities.

SAFE & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

"housing is a most crucial component of community revitalization ... safe and affordable (home ownership) provides a stable base for families ... affordable housing also attracts new residents and improves (the region's) quality of life."

BENCHMARK GOAL 10: INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY, INDIVIDUAL HOME OWNERSHIP RATES & RESIDENTIAL TAX BASE (Attachment 20)

"housing comprises a significant portion of the real property tax rolls .. improved and new housing is a direct economic stimulus ..."

TASKS:

- A.) Preserve and rehabilitate, in conjunction with CHRIC, existing housing stock for the Chadwick Bay Region.
- B.) Develop solutions in conjunction with CHRIC to deal with manufactured housing that is no longer viable and safe for the families that rent or own them.
- C.) Encourage first time homeownership through collaborations of the private, public, and non-profit sectors, maximizing the use of the USDA RD 502 Mortgage product.
- D.) Develop, in conjunction with CHRIC, comprehensive housing counseling services within the Chadwick Bay Region to assist residents in crisis, preserving homeownership, combat

predatory

populations.

lending, and provide housing options to different

